

ADAM GOSAGE.

MARCH 7, 1904.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. McCUMBER, from the Committee on Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 1285.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 1285) granting an increase of pension to Adam Gosage, have examined the same and report:

The report of the Committee on Invalid Pensions of the House of Representatives, hereto appended, is adopted and the passage of the bill is recommended.

The House report is as follows:

According to the records of the War Department this soldier, who is now 77 years of age, served as a private in Company C, Twenty-sixth Ohio Infantry, from June 13, 1861, to June 17, 1864, when honorably discharged.

Medical records of the War Department show that the beneficiary received a gunshot wound of the left wrist, fracturing the radius, at the battle before Murfreesboro, Tenn., in September, 1863, and the files of the Pension Bureau show that he was pensioned on account of this gunshot wound of left arm and wrist joint at \$6 per month from discharge, at \$8 per month from November 9, 1867, and at \$12 from February 17, 1875.

Claims for increase of pension were rejected in September, 1883; in July, 1892, and on June 8, 1901, upon the ground that the disability from the wound of left wrist did not warrant a rating in excess of \$12 per month.

A claim on account of an additional disability, namely, lumbar abscess, was rejected in July, 1892, upon the ground of no record of treatment for said disability in the service and claimant's admitted inability to establish such claim.

The pensioner claimed that he never received a pension commensurate with the injury from the wound of the wrist and asked for a rerating. The Pension Bureau, however, declined to grant such rerating, claiming that he had been adequately rated.

When first examined in August, 1865, the board of surgeons described the disability from the wound of wrist as follows:

"A musket ball passed through the left arm, just fracturing the radius and ulna and lacerating the tendons, which has resulted in contraction of all the fingers and partial ankylosis of the wrist."

On July 24, 1900, he stated for the first time in his application for increase of pension that his left arm was off above the elbow, but a certificate of medical examination made on August 15, 1883, by Dr. D. W. Wile, who was then the pension examining surgeon at Wausau, Wis., showed that between the winter of 1882 and the date of that examination the beneficiary had been the victim of an accidental injury to the same arm which had resulted in amputation just above the elbow, and this

examining surgeon then stated that the gunshot wound of the left wrist as it appeared in the winter of 1882-83 made pronation and supination impossible, and that the fingers were stiff and useless, aside from the index finger and thumb.

When last examined, on December 5, 1900, the board of surgeons described his physical condition as follows:

"Claimant's left arm has been amputated at the elbow joint, so have no evidence of gunshot wound of wrist joint. He says that the shot struck at the process of the ulna, crossing on the inside of the wrist, cutting off all the tendons or flexor muscles, which made his wrist stiff and his hand drawn on the palmer surface and useless, for which we believe him to be entitled to a \$17 rating.

"We find four scars one-half inch in diameter on the right lumbar region adherent and tender, which he says are from openings for lumbar abscesses, for which we rate him \$8.

"He is used up physically and unfit for the performance of any manual labor. He is poorly nourished, and at his age can not possibly gain strength or flesh.

"This claimant is so disabled from the loss of the left arm just above the elbow joint, injury from lumbar abscesses, and general debility as to be entitled to a rating of \$30 per month."

The Pension Bureau papers show that the left arm was amputated by reason of an injury received from a falling tree.

Papers filed with your committee show that Doctor Wilie, the pension examining surgeon who examined him on August 15, 1883, and whose certificate of examination of that date is quoted above, amputated the left arm at the elbow.

The beneficiary claims in statements filed with your committee that the disability from the wound of wrist prior to the amputation of the arm had been such that he should have been rated at \$30 since March, 1875.

He admits, however, that the crushing of the arm at the elbow by reason of the falling tree in no way changed or altered the nature of the previous wound; that the severed portion was preserved by Doctor Wilie and was now in the possession of affiant.

The Pension Bureau, of course, declined to order further medical examinations in the soldier's claim under the general law, for the reason that the wound of the wrist was sufficiently described in former certificates of examination.

Proof filed with your committee sets forth that the beneficiary is wholly disabled for the performance of manual labor, and that he has no means of support except the pension of \$12 per month.

Other proof filed sets forth that the soldier's left hand was apparently useless before it was amputated; that he could not labor with said hand, as the bullet wound was such that the cords were cut and the wrist joint broken, and the fingers drawn so that the hand was shut by the contraction of the cut cords, etc.

Taking all of the above into consideration your committee believes that the wound of accepted service origin produced such a disability prior to the time of the amputation of the arm as to have warranted a rating of \$24 per month, and relief to that extent is therefore recommended and the bill reported back with the recommendation that it pass.